

My colleague mentioned the gag rule, how under current law if the HMO decides that they do not want the physicians that are part of their network to tell patients about procedures that are not covered by the HMO, they essentially put in place a gag rule so that their own doctor, in this great democracy that we have, cannot tell them about the type of services that are available because the insurance company will not cover them.

□ 2130

That is a terrible thing to me, because I think most people when they go to a doctor, they think the doctor is going to educate them and tell them what kind of care they need. That is common sense. Yet they cannot. The doctors in many cases cannot. They are under this so-called gag rule. I think most people are shocked to find out that that is the case and that their doctor actually cannot tell them the truth essentially. That is really what we are all about. We are just trying to put in place what as you mentioned and I mentioned are just commonsense proposals.

Before we conclude tonight, I just wanted to reiterate again so that everyone understands that you and I realize that this is not going to happen because the Republican leadership in the Senate will not even bring it up. But the fact of the matter is that we have a week left. You and I know that when the Republicans decided to bring up their bad bill in August, it only took them a day to do it. They did it in one day. They basically noticed it, they had the debate and they passed what was a very bad bill. So there is no question that if the Senate wanted to take it up, even with a week left, they could do it.

Mr. GREEN. And the Senate could take up the bill number that we passed over there and put real reforms in that bill. What we did is wrong because it is a step backwards. But the Senate could change it and pass real patient protections and send it back to us and hopefully we would just concur in the Senate amendments to the bill and it would make it stronger, include an antigag rule, emergency room care and an outside appeals process.

Mr. PALLONE. The bottom line is that we know that the Republican leadership is not going to do that. They not only do not want to bring up the bad bill, they do not want to bring up anything at all because they do not want to address it. So effectively the issue is dead for now.

But I am worried about the individuals who are negatively impacted in the time before we get a chance to bring this up again. I know that it will come up again because the public as you said is just totally in favor of the kind of patient protections that we have put in our Democratic proposal. I may be unfair also in saying that it is just a Democratic proposal because the patients' bill of rights has Republican

support as well but the Republican leadership refuses to bring it up.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Members are reminded to refrain from characterizing Senate action or inaction.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT— WHY WE NEED TO STAY THE COURSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) is recognized for the balance of the minority leader's time, approximately 30 minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it has been almost 10 years since the fall of 1988 when the Communist government of Poland agreed, under great popular pressure, to permit free elections, elections which ultimately led to the "velvet revolution" throughout eastern Europe. It has been 9 years since the historic fall of 1989, when the border between Hungary and western Europe opened and thousands of east Europeans first swept aside the Iron Curtain and then brought it crashing down. It has been 8 years since the two Germans agreed to reunification and 7 years since the Soviet Union disintegrated.

For the United States, the events of a decade ago were the beginning of the end of a long struggle, a struggle that was characterized by terrible sacrifices in Korea and Vietnam; by periods of great national confidence and occasional episodes of uncertainty; by debates in the halls of Congress that were sometimes historic and solemn and sometimes partisan and shrill; and above all by a widely shared sense of national purpose that endured despite occasionally bitter internal divisions.

The constancy with which the United States carried out its global responsibilities over the long course of the Cold War is great testimony to the character of the American people and to the quality of the leaders who guided the Nation through those often trying times. In spite of the costs, in the face of great uncertainties and despite grave distractions, our Nation showed the ability to persevere. In doing so, we answered the great question about America that Winston Churchill once famously posed. "Will you stay the course?" he asked? "Will you stay the course?" The answer is, we did.

Today we need to raise a similar question once again, but this time for ourselves and in a somewhat different form. Churchill's question "Will you stay the course?" implied that there might some day be an end to the struggle, as there was to the Cold War, though no one foresaw when and how it would come. Today the key question is perhaps more challenging because it is more open-ended. It is, "Will we stay engaged?"

The term "engagement" has not yet captured as broad a range of support among political leaders and the public as those who coined it, early in the Clinton administration, evidently hoped it would. But neither did the notion of containment capture broad support until several years after it was articulated during the Truman administration. Some political leaders who later championed containment as the linchpin of our security initially criticized the notion as too passive and even timid.

Engagement, while not yet widely embraced as a characterization of our basic global posture, seems to me to express quite well what we need to be about in the post-Cold War era, that we need to be engaged in the world, and that we need to be engaged with other nations in building and maintaining a stable international security system.

Engagement will not be easy to sustain. It has become clear in recent years it will be as challenging to the United States to fully remain engaged in the post-Cold War era as it was to stay the course during the Cold War. We now know much more about the shape of the post-Cold War era than we did 8 or 4 or even 2 years ago. We know that we have not reached the end of history. We know that we face challenges to our security that in some ways are more daunting than those we faced during the Cold War. We know that it will often be difficult to reach domestic agreement on foreign affairs because legitimate, deeply held values will often be hard to reconcile. We know that we will have to risk grave dangers and pay a price to carry out our responsibilities, and because of the costs, it will sometimes be tempting to think that we would be more secure if we were more insulated from turmoil abroad. We know that we will have to struggle mightily not to allow domestic travails to divert us from the tasks that we must consistently pursue. We also know that our political system, which encourages open debate and which constantly challenges leaders to rise to the demands of the times, gives us the opportunity, if we are thoughtful and serious about our responsibilities, to see where our interests lie and to pursue our values effectively.

Mr. Speaker, today I want to say a few things about engagement in the world, why it may sometimes be difficult to sustain, why it is nonetheless necessary, and, finally, how it has succeeded in bolstering our security.

First, why engagement may be difficult to sustain. Just in the past few months, we have had a series of object lessons in the difficulties of international engagement. Last month our embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam were attacked by terrorists who have vowed to wage war against the United States as long as we are engaged in the Middle East. As President Clinton aptly put it, "America is and will remain a target of terrorists precisely because we are leaders; because